

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 6 have been amended to recite that the detachable frames support one or more of the winches from below. This was suggested by the Examiner during the interview discussed below and is supported in the figures.

Claims 1, 3, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious over Pech et al. in view of Boyer. Additionally, Claims 1 and 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious over Harnischfeger in view of Boyer. Applicants wish to thank Examiner Brahan for the courtesy of an interview on February 8, 2006 at which time these rejections were discussed. Specifically, Applicants pointed out that Boyer does not teach recesses which sandwich a winch. Instead, the winch drum 14 of Boyer is simply connected to the drum supports 17a, 17b (col. 3, lines 48-52). In view of the above, the Examiner indicated that the outstanding prior art rejections would be withdrawn if the claims were further amended to recite that the detachable frames support one or more of the winches from below. This has been done in the present response.

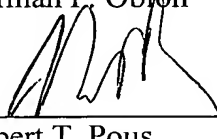
Concerning the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, applicants again pointed out during the interview that one skilled in the art would be apprised of the scope of the claims, which is the applicable standard of clarity required under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (MPEP 2173.02). A negative limitation is not unacceptable so long as the negative nature of the limitation does not render the claim unclear. MPEP 2173.05(i). Since there is no ambiguity as to whether the shafts are included in the limitation of the “smaller diameter portions,” the claims are not indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112. It is Applicant’s understanding that this rejection will be withdrawn as well.

Application No. 10/668,174
Reply to Office Action of January 13, 2006.

Applicants therefore believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance
and respectfully solicit an early notice of allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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